

H.R. 3221, the New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security and Consumer Protection Act Fact Sheet

What this bill does:

Fuels and Transportation

1. Almost identical royalty relief provisions to H.R. 6; also increases fines for companies that fail to pay royalties.
2. Slows the timetable for environmental review of proposals to drill for oil shale in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming, and prohibits drilling on the Roan Plateau in Colorado.
3. Authorizes grants for offshore alternative energy projects (such as tidal power).
4. Creates an Energy Department grant program to help motor fuel vendors to upgrade or modify existing equipment to allow greater distribution of alternative fuels, such as ethanol or biodiesels.
5. Creates a new grant program administered through Agriculture and Energy Departments to research and develop more biofuels, or energy sources derived from plant life.
6. Authorizes \$640 million in loan guarantees by the USDA for the creation of biofuel refineries or production plants.
7. Allows federal funding to pay for 100 percent of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement transportation projects.
8. Authorizes \$850 million in grants for public transportation agencies to allow them to reduce fares or expand their services in order to promote wider use of transit systems.
9. Authorizes \$250 million per year in grants for short line and regional railroads to upgrade their capacity to handle 286,000 pound rail cars, which will reduce truck traffic.

10. Authorizes \$10 million per year in grants for a “green locomotive” program.
11. Authorizes up to \$2 billion in loan guarantees for the construction of maritime vessels to handle short sea shipping.
12. Authorizes the Energy Department to provide loan guarantees for the construction of facilities to domestically manufacture advanced vehicle batteries.

Energy Efficiency and Electricity Standards

1. Prohibits the sale of 100-watt light bulbs that do not produce at least 60 lumens per watt (lumens are light output, watts are the amount of energy used.)
2. Prohibits the sale of lamps beginning in 2020 that are not at least 300 percent more efficient than lamps being sold at the time of enactment.
3. Requires the Energy Department to set new energy use standards for home appliances, electric motors, and residential boilers.
4. Allows the Energy Department to establish regional energy-efficiency standards for portable space heaters and window air conditioners, to provide the "maximum level of energy savings that are technically and economically justified" in each region.
5. Directs the Energy Department to support updating national building standards for residential and commercial buildings at least once every three years, in order to provide energy savings of 30 percent by 2010, and 50 percent by 2020.
6. Increases authorized funding for the weatherization assistance grants, which provide funding for state programs that weather-proof the homes of low-income, elderly and disabled individuals, to \$1.2 billion in FY 07, and \$1.4 billion in FY 08 through FY 12, up from \$600 million and \$700 million respectively as a result of the Shays Amendment, which passed by voice vote.

7. Creates a new grant program under which the Energy Department would provide 25 percent of the costs of projects to invest in smart grid technologies, which are electricity infrastructure modernizations that increase reliability and security.
8. The bill sets new requirements for federal agencies to review their greenhouse gas emissions, including both building and vehicle standards, as well as setting new energy-efficiency policies on Capitol grounds.

Research Provisions

1. Authorizes \$75 million for the Energy Department to award grants to states that have low rates of ethanol production.
2. Increases funding authorized under current law for bioenergy research to \$377 million in FY 2008, \$398 million in FY 2009, and \$419 million in FY 2010.
3. Authorizes \$140 million per year to test carbon storage and examine the cost and feasibility of geologic storage methods for carbon dioxide.
4. Authorizes \$220 million to award grants to states to purchase photovoltaic technology (i.e., cells that convert sunlight to electric energy).
5. Authorizes \$50 million to support educational programs related to solar power.
6. Authorizes \$43 million for a research program into the solar energy storage.
7. Authorizes \$450 million for Energy Department programs to promote R&D and commercial applications of geothermal energy technologies.
8. Authorizes \$250 million for the Energy Department to conduct research to expand the production of energy derived from waves, tidal flows, ocean currents, and ocean thermal energy conversion.

9. Authorizes \$4.9 billion to promote long-term efforts to overcome risks and barriers for the commercial use of advanced energy technologies. The agency would award grants and contracts to develop high-risk and high-potential energy technologies.

Policy on Global Warming

The measure states that it is United States policy to work within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to seek commitments from all major greenhouse gas-emitting countries to reduce their emissions.

It states that during 2007, the United States will engage in "high-level dialogue" with Group of Eight nations; with the European Union and Japan; and with China, India, Brazil, and other developing countries.

Foreign Assistance

1. Authorizes \$1.2 billion through 2012 for new programs to develop and promote international renewable energy sources.
2. Authorizes \$200 million per year for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to assist developing countries in adopting policies and programs to promote clean and energy-efficient technologies.
3. Requires the Commerce Department to expand or create a new corps in the Foreign Commercial Service officers to promote the export of U.S. renewable energy exports in other countries, particularly in India and China.

Green Jobs

Authorizes \$125 million in each fiscal year for the Labor Department to administer a new grant program for training programs for workers in the renewable energy and energy-efficiency sectors.